

Why is the apostleship of Paul so important?

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, *I magnify mine office*" (Rom. 11:13).

In this context Paul is emphasizing his authority as the Apostle of the Gentiles to make clear the dispensational relationship between Israel and the Body of Christ -- as the context indicates. The place of spiritual leadership has been taken from Israel because of their unbelief (Rom. 11:19, 20) and given to Gentiles. While Israel's setting aside is neither complete (Rom. 11:1) nor permanent (Rom. 11: 23), a new program has been introduced and demands its own newly revealed truth. Only Paul's God-given message explains how God can be dealing with Gentiles as He is today.

These things cannot be understood by referring to the Old Testament, or even to the gospel records, for they were hid in God and not made known when those scriptures were written (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:2 - 7).¹ Therefore the office of Paul, with its God given authority (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 2:13) must be given full recognition or this whole message is lost.

It is important to see that Paul spends several chapters in Second Corinthians (chapters 10 - 13) defending his apostleship. He is not defending himself, but his office. Why? Because the truth of his message stands or falls with his divine office as an apostle and prophet. To see how important this is, leave Paul's epistles, and his Acts ministry, out of your Bible and then try to find in the rest of the Scriptures:

- Even one word about the "Body of Christ."
- Any revelation stipulating no difference between Jew and Gentile.
- Any reference to "one new man" due to the reconciliation between Jew and Gentile.
- Any satisfactory explanation for the nearly two thousand years break between the 69th week of Daniel nine and the beginning of the seventieth week. (Even in Peter's explanation given in 2 Pet. 3:15, 16 he links it with the revelation received through Paul)
- Any verse teaching that if a believer is circumcised Christ will profit him nothing.
- Any reference to believers being changed and caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
- Any reference to being crucified with Christ, raised with Him, or seated with Him in the heavenlies.
- Any reference to being baptized into Christ by the Holy Spirit.
- Any reference to Israel being cut out of the Olive tree (the Olive tree represents God's witness to the world) and being replaced, even temporarily, by Gentiles.
- Any teaching that there will be a time when Gentiles will be saved through the casting away of Israel, rather than through Israel's ministry.
- Any teaching that they will be saved *apart from* the terms set forth in Isaiah 56:6: "Also the sons of the *stranger* [Gentiles] , that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to

¹While the Gospel of John was written long *after* the mystery was revealed, it records events and discourses which occurred long *before* that revelation, when the age of grace was still a wonderful secret hid in God, and not made known.

love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that *keepeth the sabbath* from polluting it, and *taketh hold of my* [Mosaic] *covenant* ."

-- That believers are free from the dietary laws of the Old Covenant. Even during the Tribulation Israel will still be under those laws. "For by fire and by his sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, *eating swine's flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse*, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD." (Isa. 66:16, 17).

Contrast Paul's instructions to us: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and *nothing to be refused*, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." (1 Tim.4:3 - 5).

Paul felt foolish defending *himself* (2 Cor. 11:1 and following context), but knew the vital importance of defending his *divine authority* as the Apostle to the Gentiles, for the whole body of truth concerning this age of grace hangs in the balance!

--- William P. Heath Bible Study # 77 < My Documents\Bible Studies\imp-paul > -- Microsoft Word
-- or (< bibstudy\imp-paul.sam > -- AmiPro)

See also Bible Study # 72 "The Distinctiveness of This Age of Grace"
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